

# Detecting DECEPTION

## Holmes City native writes book on body language

**D**o you know how to detect when someone is lying? Holmes City native Spencer Coffman does, and he's outlined it all in his first book, *A Guide to Deception*.

The son of John and Marie Coffman of Holmes City, Coffman was homeschooled and graduated in 2008 at age 16. He then received an Associate of Science in individualized professional studies and a diploma in concrete masonry from Alexandria Technical College in 2010. At Minnesota State University Moorhead (MSUM), he received Bachelor of Arts degrees in psychology and philosophy in 2012.

Coffman didn't start out with a full-fledged book in mind. In fact, it began as a research paper about the human's ability to detect smiles for his senior psychology class at MSUM.

From there, he modified his work into an article for publication in 2014, splitting it in to six parts thanks to the interest of the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin.



**Spencer Coffman**  
AUTHOR

However, collaboration with the FBI didn't pan out, so he set out to publish it on his own. Though he called journal after journal, his attempts were unsuccessful.

"In March 2015, I began to lose hope that I was going to publish my deception article," he said. "In May, I was re-motivated and decided to simply turn my article into a book and get it published."

Through most of June and July, he learned Adobe InDesign to lay out the book, designed a cover, solicited a forward and researched publishers.

Finally, after six months of hard work, he published the book through self-publication. But why did he turn a research

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paper into a book in the first place?

"I felt that this information needed to be known," he said. "Being able to tell whether or not someone is lying is an unknown skill. It is a science that people can learn. Its value is indescribable."

"My hope is that people will read this book and really make an effort to learn what is written. ... There is even a 'how to' section that explains how to get the most from this book."

Coffman also hopes that college professors will adopt the book into their courses.

He plans to write more books on body language or other emotional signs, as well as try his hand at fiction novels or short stories.

"I'm 23 now, so hopefully I'll have a long future ahead of me," he said. "There is so much more to do."

As for a career, though he is currently self-employed and enjoys the opportunities it presents, he wants to put his knowledge of psychology and human behavior to good use.

He's surrounded by many possibilities – consulting at a large company, hiring, etc. – but ultimately hopes he ends up in law enforcement, profiling or other government work.

## *A GUIDE TO Deception*

By  
**Spencer Coffman**

Forward by  
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Contributed  
Holmes City native Spencer Coffman recently published his first book, *A Guide to Deception*, which details how to recognize body language and detect lies.